



U.S. Department of Justice

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STERLING MAN ARRESTED ON FEDERAL MAIL FRAUD CHARGE

ROCKFORD -- PATRICK J. FITZGERALD, United States Attorney for the Northern District of Illinois, JESSE WHITE, Illinois Secretary of State, and KENNETH T. LAAG, Postal Inspector-in-Charge of the United States Postal Service, and Illinois State Police Director LARRY G. TRENT today made the following announcement:

On Wednesday, March 1, 2007, **RICHARD A. WELLS**, 51, of 1307 6TH Avenue, Sterling, Illinois, was arrested by agents from the Illinois Secretary of State Securities Department and Illinois State Police on a federal complaint charging him with mail fraud.

Wells appeared in Rockford federal court before United States Magistrate Judge P. Michael Mahoney on March 1, 2007, and was released on bond. Wells is scheduled to appear again before Magistrate Mahoney on March 21, 2007.

According to the criminal complaint, Wells devised a scheme to defraud an investor of \$5800 in life insurance money by means of false pretenses and caused a commercial interstate carrier to deliver an insurance check to the investor in furtherance of that scheme.

If convicted, Wells faces a maximum potential sentence of up to 20 years in prison and a fine of up to \$250,000. If convicted, the actual sentence will be determined by a United States District Court Judge, guided by the United States Sentencing Guidelines.

The case is investigated by agents from the United States Postal Inspectors Service, the Enforcement Division of the Illinois Secretary of State Securities Department and the Illinois State Police. The case is being prosecuted in federal court by Rockford Assistant United States Attorney Mark T. Karner.

Members of the public are reminded that a criminal complaint is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. The defendant is entitled to indictment by a federal grand jury and a fair trial at which time the government has the burden of proving guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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